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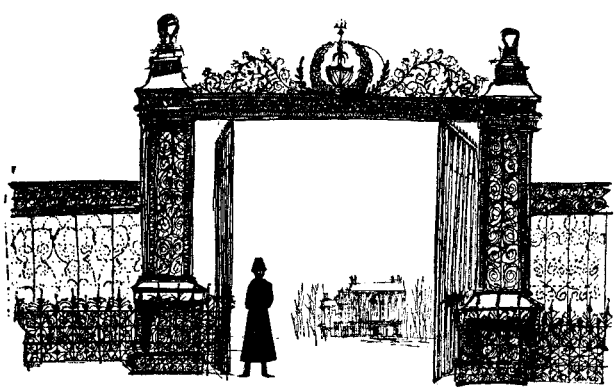

Britain: Reaction on the Left
By Michael P. Fogarty

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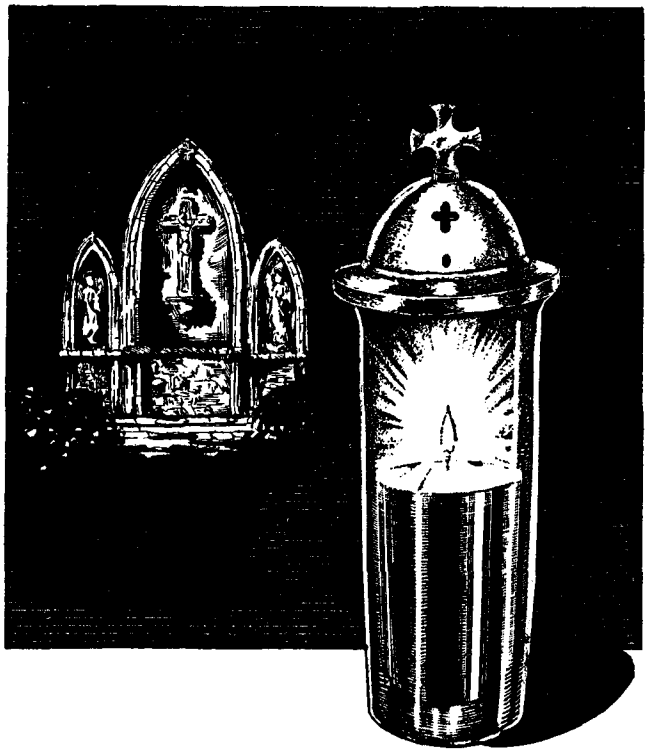

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

THE VIRTUOUS TEMPTATION

WHEN Adlai Stevenson returned from his six-months world tour, he made a statement which is, in many ways, a valuable summary of the problems facing the United States. In one part of it he warned: ". . . the Communists will exploit every possibility of dividing America and her allies. . . . Holding together the grand alliance of the free world is . . . . the most important and difficult task our government faces, for unilateralism is just the new face of isolationism, and it spells disaster."

This warning deserves repeating. Isolationism's "new face" has recently been seen rather frequently, and it has been admired by some Americans who are impatient with our allies. If it should become in fact the face of United States foreign policy, if "unilateralism" should widen further the breach between Western Europe and America, then the result may indeed be disaster. The danger of this is certainly clear and present now.

That this danger should have arisen was, perhaps, inevitable. We are not a patient people, and our view of the world has traditionally been marked by a rigid kind of moral idealism. We have known what is right, and we know now what is wrong. The issues in the present world struggle have seemed to us clear-cut, and we have believed that other nations must be for us or against us to the extent that they are for good and against evil. No halfway house has seemed possible: our victory must be total.

The difficulty with this view is that reality will not yield to such a simplistic analysis, no matter how nobly motivated it may be. The policies of nations must be based on reality as it is, complex and unsatisfactory though that be, rather than on things as we desire them.

United States foreign policy, for example, must take account of another fact which Mr. Stevenson pointed out: "Everyone does not have our views of Communism and its menace. Many who have lived in thraldom or insecurity for centuries do not share in the same degree America's alarm. Nor do they think that we are endowed with all the wisdom, power, and morality in the world." We may hate to admit this. We may resent it if admitted. But it is there. A foreign policy which ignores it is foredoomed to failure—and failure in this instance means the death of civilization.

WE cannot live alone in the twentieth century, and so we cannot act alone either, no matter how much we would like to do both. And this means that we must frequently be satisfied with the imperfect, that we must be flexible in adjusting our views to meet the world situation as it actually is. For if we demand too much we are likely to obtain nothing except our ultimate defeat. We must never appease, but we must remain willing to compromise.

Much of the current criticism of United States policy is based on the fact that we seem to have equated compromise with appeasement and to be demanding all or nothing from the Communist world. And this criticism is being made not only by elements in Europe suspect of anti-Americanism but also by those whose friendship for us cannot be questioned.

It is being made in England, for example, not only by the *New Statesman and Nation* but also by the *Economist*. It is almost universally agreed that United States prestige is at a new low mark. We may resent this as unfair, but we cannot ignore it. And merely to denounce it and, in anger, to go our own way down the unilateral road is no answer. That way lies disaster. We must somehow examine our policies, their basic premises and ultimate goals, to explain the present situation. We must somehow recapture the initiative.

To do this we must renounce any doctrinaire approach to the problems of war and peace. Retaining an inflexible position on all matters of principle, we must be willing to adjust in many matters of fact. We must convince the nations that our fight is not for the United States alone but, primarily, for the peace of mankind. It is to the task of achieving this peace that America has been called, and it is something that cannot be achieved alone. We must remain strong—and patient. Neither, alone, is enough. Together, they may win the world.

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IRAN

LUCK cannot forever take the place of policy, and the past nine months of cold war have just about used up all the good luck the western nations can sanely expect to have for a long time to come. The events in Iran have been as implausible and melodramatic a reversal as has been seen since E. Phillips Oppenheim passed on.

Now the West has once more been given a new chance. The Zahedi government in Iran will not be anglophile, but it may at least be expected to be realistic. It is anti-Communist; the counterrevolution took place, of course, because Mossadegh was on the verge of alliance with Russia. This is the time for America boldly and generously to give aid to the new government, and lay the ground for fresh and discreet negotiation to get the Iranian oil refineries once again in operation.

Zahedi and the Shah must immediately bring tangible improvements to the Iranian economy—the people are still restless and the Communists are still strong. The only way they can bring these improvements is with outside aid. The only way they can bring more permanent stability is by getting the oil refineries back to work. We have everything to gain by quickly and firmly helping them.

THE SLOGAN OF UNITY

FOR some months now, the biggest threat to western policy in Germany has been the threat of unification, for western policy is based fundamentally on an armed West German Republic.

The threat has now materialized and been found to be a shadow. The Soviet Union has offered terms for unification, and they are the same unsatisfactory terms she has offered many times in the past. The immediate effect is the strengthening of Chancellor Adenauer in his election campaign.

But the fact of German division remains, and with it the question whether Germany can ever be stable so long as she is split. One side of the case is the argument that the only way to bring a Soviet withdrawal from East Germany is to permit a neutralized German state.

The first flaw in this argument is the fact that the USSR has thus far shown no signs of permitting any all-German government except a meaningless coalition of the present Eastern and Western governing groups. There has been much talk about a neutralized Germany both in the West (from as eminent a leader as Churchill) and in Moscow, but the Soviet Union, as usual, has its own definition of neutrality.

The German nation must eventually be reunited. But the block is not the West, it is Soviet intransigence, as well as the fundamental artificiality of any "neutralized" Germany. Free nations cannot be permanently neutralized. Thus German unity, powerful (and useful) as it may be as an emotional issue, seems only a glimmering in the shadows of the future, dependent, like so much else, on what happens in the Kremlin. The West must meet the issue, but it would be folly to base our immediate plans on the slogan of unity.

NEXT WEEK

RICHARD HAYES writes of two volumes of literary criticism by V. S. Pritchett and Gilbert Highet.

"Both gentlemen are bookish, neither academic, and both are, to a certain benign degree, engaged in masquerades: Professor Highet in that of the entertainer, all but successfully concealing the hard, muscular core of his thought; Mr. Pritchett in the role of the naked sensibility, when I should define him as a prophet in search of a dogma. What distinguishes each is voracity —a positive richness of experience—and a passionate commitment to the virtue and rightness of the private self in a public world. . . . How well they complement each other—the English bard and the Scottish reviewer."

TOO MANY FIRST-GRADERS

WHEN the nation's schools reopen next week for thirty million youngsters, their facilities will be taxed as never before. From all angles the statistics are alarming. Many classes have to be held in "firetraps." There is a shortage of some fifty thousand teachers. Two-thirds of the pupils will attend schools where there is not enough space to go around. In all, there are a third too many schoolchildren for the facilities that exist.

Each of the devices resorted to in order to meet these shortages has great drawbacks. One is to crowd so many boys and girls into each classroom as to make effective instruction virtually impossible. The alternative is to separate the children into morning and afternoon shifts. This shorter school day greatly limits the daily course of instruction for the pupil and adds to the teacher's burden by giving her two separate groups to contend with and considerably less time to deal with each.

One of the most baffling tasks is to secure teachers

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for the lower grades—where the impact of postwar births is now reaching record proportions. The lower salaries and inferior social status of grade school teachers in many American communities make such posts comparatively unattractive. School officials also compain that the very fact that these teachers are in such demand (and have greater difficulties to contend with) leads many of the newer teachers to make little serious attempt to complete their year's curriculum and lightly to brush off remonstrances on the part of their school supervisors. The circle is a vicious one.

All this provides one more unhappy reminder that these are most unpropitious days for cutting taxes and economizing on public expenditure. There is no feasible substitute for sufficient desks, classrooms and safe school buildings. There is no substitute for salaries, job security and working conditions that will attract an adequate number of competent teachers. Yet it is not simply a case of raising and spending money. Here, if anywhere, is the place for active local initiative. The problems now confronting our schools call for a new degree of initiative and foresight on the part of city fathers and individual citizens the nation over.

MIDNIGHT IN FRANCE

THE last fortnight has seen the whole structure of affairs in France taken apart and put together again. There were the almost-general strikes at home, the explosive removal of the Sultan of Morocco, and stirrings of a new policy in Indochina.

There are two possible solutions for the stalemate in Indochina. General Navarre and the present cabinet have a strategy which would grant real independence to the governments of the Associated States of Indochina, and which, with luck, increased United States aid, and a steady government in Paris, might inflict a considerable defeat on the Communists during 1954 and bring about a favorable settlement. The alternative is the plan advanced by M. Mendes-France, the man who almost became Premier during the summer. Mendes-France would negotiate an immediate settlement with the Communists on the basis of a unified Indochina. There is little reason to suppose that this would mean anything other than a paralyzed coalition, or an eventual coup, of the noiseless style at which the Communists are so practiced.

The struggle in Indochina obviously must be brought to an end. Laniel and Navarre propose to do it painfully but realistically. Mendes-France proposes to do it through wishful thinking. France faces the decision, and odds are that it will choose the Mendes-France solution—for domestic as well as military reasons.

The French clock in Morocco has also ticked around to the heralded moment of decision. The old Sultan of Morocco was closely allied with Arab nationalism, and blocked France's tentative attempts at conciliation. He and his supporters were engaged in a silent but nonetheless deadly struggle with France for power in that crucial colony. The new Sultan is supported chiefly by the feudal Pasha of Marrakesh, a Berber leader, and anything but a progressive or enlightened native leader. France has announced a new reform policy for Morocco. If it really means what it says this time, and can take advantage of the cooperation of the new Sultan, opening legitimate outlets for Moroccan nationalism, it may create a cooperative Moroccan state. If it fails again, Moroccan nationalism, inflamed by the conservative character of the new religious leadership, may explode, and this time bring civil war.

So both of France's colonial trouble-centers look to Paris for solution. And Paris, unfortunately, is in no position to offer long-range solutions or stable policy. The French economy is like a toy top which is wound tighter and tighter. Each new cabinet has been a turn in the screw, and now it is wound as tight as it will go. Industry is structurally primitive by American standards, relying on restricted production rather than on increased consumer buying power. The workers and middle-class have a marginal income and are convinced that they are being exploited. Agriculture is backward. Taxation is inequitably distributed. In short, some radical changes must be made, or the Metropolitan French economy (and government) will break. Mendes-France and his group offer internal reform, along with a popular and painless plan to end the Indochinese war. Laniel, with his compromise cabinet, also has plans for reform, but by starting with the civil service, he has alienated the restless French workers. It is a desperately involved crisis; a time when the constitution might fall; a time of great concern for the democracies. If the French Assembly stands with Laniel a little longer, he might pull them through. If he fails, the government will almost certainly move left to Mendes-France, who offers a new deal at home, but a very dangerous deal in the Far East.

NEW POWER POLICY

THE Administration's statement on hydroelectric power development combines two conflicting ideas. Secretary McKay declares that the Interior Department aims to reverse the trends of the past twenty years; the new policy is based on the con-

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tention that the primary responsibility for developing power facilities and flood control rests with the people locally. Yet the prospect which the Secretary sets forth does include large-scale reclamation of arid and semi-arid lands under the auspices of his department. It also envisages on occasion multi-purpose hydro-electric developments which because of their size, or the complexity of the problems involved, are beyond the capacities of local public and private enterprise. Moreover, the shift in policy is somewhat mitigated by continuation of a number of existing arrangements such as the priority enjoyed by rural cooperatives, and by various municipalities, in buying power from government-operated facilities.

One of the biggest achievements of the past two decades has been the electrification of the American farm. This was accomplished despite the stubborn resistance of the private utility companies, who for the most part simply refused to construct the necessary power lines. Only the Rural Electrification Administration, with local groups organized as consumer cooperatives, was able to overcome the hitherto impregnable defenses of the private power companies. The result was to transform the way of life and work on more than half the nation's farms. Is the bill recently proposed in the House to raise the interest rates on these REA loans symptomatic? In any event the record of the power companies in America's rural areas does not make their heightened role in the formulation of the nation's power policies appear any too promising—particularly when viewed in conjunction with official attacks on, and curtailment of, the TVA.

That is one aspect of the picture. The other is that decentralization has its points. One highly respectable school has it, for instance, that often the best single way to avoid disastrous floods is to control retention of moisture by the soil and by the "little waters" upstream. Moreover the tug-of-war between the Reclamation Bureau and the Army Engineers (and even their later shotgun collaboration) has had lamentable results in the vast Missouri Valley, to put it mildly. Nothing is sacrosanct about recent power policy; public hearings at which all interested parties have ample chance to testify should prove enlightening.

The first big test case, on which hearings are to be resumed later this month, has to do with damming the Snake River in Idaho (near the Oregon border). The Truman Administration's project of one large dam that would contribute toward supplying the power needs of the whole Northwest is to be supplanted by three smaller dams to supply only local needs. The latter might well coincide with the preference of the local populace. Yet would that necessarily make the revised plan the wiser course? One way of arriving at a statesmanlike formula would be to extend the principle of local responsibility in these matters to a regional basis. Otherwise opposition to over-centralization in Washington could lead under present auspices to inaction or to a whole series of wasteful and uncoordinated projects that would work counter to further conservation and development of our natural resources for the public good.

WHERE WAS MR. HUGHES?

LAST week we wondered, editorially, what Mr. Eisenhower would say when he dedicated a $32,000,000 federal slum clearance and low rent housing project in New York. This business of a Republican President christening a Fair Deal do-gooding scheme seemed to us filled with interesting possibilities.

Mr. Eisenhower came to New York as scheduled and he gave his speech. In the course of it he replied, extemporaneously, to a criticism Mr. Robert Moses had made of recent cuts by Congress in federal appropriations for low rent public housing:

"There was some criticism, I think, a minute ago about the exact size of the appropriations made by the federal government for housing," the President said. "I don't go along with that too much for this reason: there are too many vicissitudes in the pulling and hauling and arguments of free government, but there is certainly, if anyone knows the heart of America, you can't go to them and show them that great bodies of citizens are living in hovels, unfit habitations and not get help—help expressed not only from their private purses, as Mr. Baruch has done, but through official channels of appropriations.

"But never let us forget what is government," Mr. Eisenhower continued. "Government is people and people are you. We can't sit here and transfer our responsibilities to some vague sort of entity that we refer to as a Washington government. Each of us has a very definite part to play in everything that is here because that is the heart of America. In it we expect to see living happy families, families who because of their standard of living are the nation's best weapon against Communism."

We've read this statement several times, and we're still wondering that the President thinks. We don't know whether "creeping socialism" was denounced. Perhaps we'll never know. We are more convinced than ever, though, that Mr. Emmet Hughes, the President's chief speech-writer, is an indispensable man on the Eisenhower team.

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Religious Tolerance

WE HAVE BEEN SLOW TO SEE THAT THE MEDIEVAL UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE WAS AN ANOMALY RATHER THAN THE CHRISTIAN NORM.

VICTOR WHITE

TO ask a dogmatic theologian—and a Roman Catholic one at that—to discuss toleration may seem like asking the devil to describe the joys of heaven. The very word dogmatism has become synonymous with intolerance. Words like heresy-hunt, inquisition, *odium theologicum,* proselytism, *auto-da-fé,* stand for expressions of intolerance to which some members of my profession have rendered all too zealous service. And though the fact that these words have become bad words is often due to a misreading of history—a distortion of historical fact, or a measuring of the facts by an anachronistic yardstick—there can be no denying that there is plenty of fire behind all this murky smoke.

Yet these very facts summon the theologian, as perhaps nobody else, to a searching scrutiny of the character and grounds of tolerance and intolerance; and, where need be, to self-examination, repentance, and amendment. And perhaps his scrutiny may be of service even to those who do not accept his assumptions or terms of reference. We know now that our era of liberal toleration is not so secure as we liked to suppose a few decades ago. The psychological law of compensation will lead us to expect that a merely irrational, uncritized ideal of unmitigated tolerance will breed its opposite in an eruption of extreme intolerance; and we find that in fact the organized ideological tyranny of totalitarianism and the little-less tyrannical pressure of utilitarianism, bourgeois "normalcy," are the direct offspring of unrealistic liberal sentiment, of ideological *laissez-faire.*

Many of my colleagues and co-religionists have in fact been much engaged in recent years in this scrutiny of the character and grounds of tolerance: I think especially of Professor Maritain's pioneer manifesto, *True Humanism,* of the recent symposium of some French theologians, *Tolérance et communauté humaine,* and the work of Father John Courtney Murray. In the little I can deal with here I shall profit from their reflections and researches, but neither limit myself to them nor commit these authors to all I have to say.

Apologists for historic Christendom (who are not necessarily apologists for Christianity) have done well to remind us of the hard truth that unlimited tolerance is neither desirable nor possible in the human situation. Every individual, every group, must set limits to its tolerance if it is to survive. No society, however great store it may set on freedom of thought and conscience, can long tolerate thoughts which issue in anti-social behavior, whatever the sincerity and conviction with which they are held. Nor is it easy to set limits to the kinds of thoughts which may prove socially disruptive. They cannot, for instance, be restricted to thoughts about what is, and what is not, criminal, unfair, or indecent behavior. They may include thoughts as amoral as those of arithmetic: it is intolerable that my butcher or my income-tax assessor should hold personal theories about the rules of addition and subtraction if they are to result in my financial disadvantage. Nor is it the interests of society only which must, in practice, set limits to tolerable thoughts. Psychoanalysis has amply confirmed that there are limits to the thoughts which the individual can tolerate in his own mind, consistent with the self-preservation of his own ego. And although psychoanalysis has also shown that the repression of unwanted thoughts is often no less detrimental to sanity (a fact which probably holds good in the body politic also), its own notorious tendency to dogmatism, sectarianism, and intolerance is a striking testimony to the accuracy of its findings in this particular.

We should be grateful for these realistic reminders, even if they do not always justify the historic events —the Inquisition and the rest—which they in some measure explain. Invaluable, too, is the distinction some French thinkers have made between what they call sacral and pluralist societies. In the sacral society it is an understood thing that *Weltanschauung,* ultimate beliefs and values of a religious or 'metaphysical' nature, do profoundly influence practical conduct and social forms. In societies of this sort, the myth, the ritual, the creed, are the very soul or form which

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Father White is an English Dominican, whose latest book is "God and the Unconscious." This article is adapted from a talk delivered over the BBC.

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animate the community, give it cohesion, meaning, and purpose, sanction its patterns of behavior, its laws and customs. In such a society, so-called metaphysical beliefs and religious practices cannot be a matter of private choice or individual opinion; it cannot tolerate radical departures from the group-mind on these subjects (even when they are psychologically possible) without inviting the disintegration of the group and the demoralization of the individuals who compose it. The ruins of countless tribal organizations and cultures are there to tell us what happens when, by force or craft, an alien religion or *Weltanschaaung* or ethic is superimposed on, and destroys, the inherited native pattern.

NOTWITHSTANDING numberless variations and stages of evolution, the sacral society was normal, possibly universal, until comparatively recent centuries. Even then, the pluralist society was only a gradual, almost an accidental, growth, confined to a comparatively small proportion of the human race. By a pluralist society I understand, with Père Congar, a society in which not only is it a matter of bare fact that many divergent positions or ideas about human destiny are held by inhabitants of the same area and members of the same human community, but one in which this situation is generally accepted and is indeed a basis of their mutual collaboration within that community. Such pluralism is now the norm in most Western, and many other, countries; and is constitutionalized not only in so religiously heterogeneous a country as the United States but also in so dominantly Catholic a country as the Republic of Ireland, and in the dominantly Hindu Republic of India.

We must remember that it was not any idea that tolerance was a good that first made it the accepted thing. Hard facts and practical necessities first forced governments to recognize that persistence with the sacral pattern defeated its own purpose. They found that Acts of Uniformity, however statesmanlike and comprehensive, served no longer to unify, but to divide and disintegrate, the human community. But the recusants—papist or puritan—who forced this recognition could hardly conceive of, let alone admire and suffer for, a pluralist society of universal tolerance. They only proved, once more, that there are men who fear those that kill the soul rather than those that kill only the body. The creed, the myth, the ritual give meaning to life; and such men find death, torture, and dispossession preferable to meaninglessness and infidelity to truth and reality as they apprehend it.

To this day, although we are mostly agreed in accepting pluralism—not only *de facto* but in some measure *de jure*—we are far from agreed in our reasons for doing so. Indeed it may be said that we tolerate and accept toleration for reasons which we severally would sometimes find intolerable. For some of us, it is for no clear reason at all, religious toleration is just the understood thing. For others, there is just a vague sense that metaphysical beliefs or disbeliefs, religious needs or promptings, are a purely irrational and involuntary factor, a product of heredity, upbringing and environment, which take different forms in different people, and for which they are to be as little praised or blamed as for the color of their eyes.

Others would find in this variety a very fine thing, akin to the infinite variety of nature—a manifestation of the fertility of the human spirit, if not also a spectrum refracting the Divine Light. Others will take a more cynical view: one religion is as good or bad as another; at best they are matters of opinion, obsolete ideologies still claiming lip-service, but no longer very effective in molding individual conduct, let alone in shaping the pattern of social and economic relations and historical trends. The Marxist will recognize that these ideologies are still effective; but to him the effectiveness is that of an opiate, which renders the proletariat insensitive to its own historic destiny, and becomes an instrument of its own subjugation. For this reason the Marxist can logically tolerate neither pluralism nor toleration.

But others, influenced by the findings of psychology and anthropology, also recognize the persistence of functional efficacy in religious beliefs and practices, but are led to conclusions which justify the utmost toleration. In their view, religious intolerance and proselytism are little short of spiritual murder. According to Jung, the psychological function of the *mythos,* the ritual or the dogma, is that of protecting the ego from dissolution in the unconscious, while at the same time they mediate its contents in digestible and beneficial form. The ego is at once protected by them from meaninglessness and insanity, which men fear more than death; and they are mediums of meaningfulness and health to the human psyche. Suzanne Langer, reaching similar conclusions from different premises, writes: "Interference with acts that have ritual value (conscious or unconscious) is always felt as the most intolerable injury one man, or group of men, can do to another. . . . It is a breach of personality. . . . Common insult is a blow at one's ego; but constraint of conscience strikes at one's ego and superego, one's whole world, humanity, and purpose."

These are considerations which the theologian—and also the evangelist, and the foreign missionary especially—must seriously take into account. But they do not resolve his own problem. The empirical psychologist or sociologist may legitimately confine his attention to the observable functions of mythos, ritual, and creed, while abstracting from that question of their truth or falsehood which is the inescapable con-

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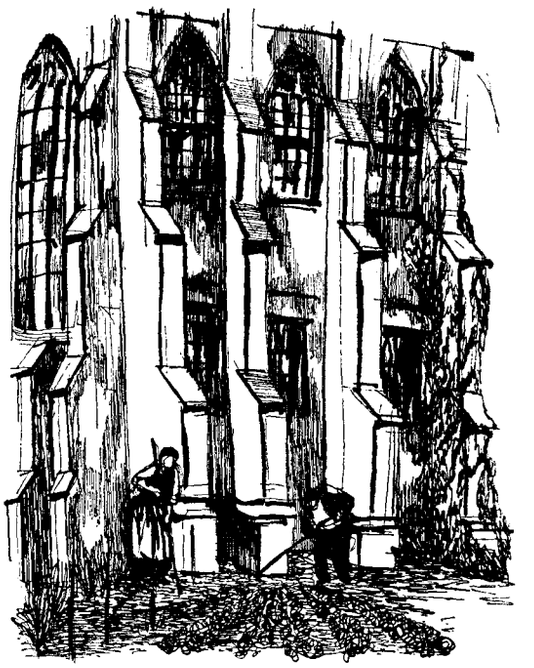
cern of the preacher or the theologian. His calling forbids him to evade the issue of religious truth and falsehood; compels him to define and justify his attitude to the one and the other. He is not absolved from this concern by the reflection that zeal for truth has too often been a cloak for the most evil and revolting of human passions.

A book like Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun* will remind him of the hideous results which can follow from such self-deception, and also of the evils attending idolatry of the dogma: the substitution of the formula for the infinite mystery which it should communicate. Yet even that book will tell him, and with astonishing penetration, how much is at stake for human weal and happiness in a matter so seemingly academic and remote as the correct formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Behind the monstrous atrocities at Loudun was not too much, but too little, dogma and theology; and Jung also, from his purely empirical standpoint, has helped us to understand how great was the issue, even for the history of our European consciousness, in the old, passionate controversies about the Trinity and the Incarnation. No spiritual teacher of renown has ever supposed that it could be a matter of indifference what men think and say about ultimate realities or values and their own relationship to them. Notwithstanding some efforts to present Oriental religions as favoring a liberal indifferentism and a freedom from creeds and dogma, there is little documentary evidence to support the presentation. Right view or right thinking is the first step in the path of the Buddha, and the word "orthodoxy" is precisely its Greek equivalent. In the Pali scriptures there is much that reads like accounts of heresy trials.

THE question of tolerance and intolerance drives the theologian and the religious teacher into the deeper question of the truth or falsehood of what he or others believe and teach; and this, in its turn, should lead him to inquire into the character and scope, the *kind* of truth which he is concerned to believe and proclaim. And if he be a Christian, the answer should be plain enough. His professional concern is not with any sort of truth, neither mathematical, nor scientific, nor philosophical, nor social, nor even ethical truth, but with the *verbum salutis,* the message of human healing and salvation, the Gospel, the good news of the Divine offer of human deliverance and the means for its attainment. His message, he believes, is the message of Divine love for mankind, and if he takes at all seriously his own calling as its messenger, he cannot tolerate within the Church, the community of believers, any distortion of that message which would be harmful to its hearers: he must hate heresy because he loves God and his neighbor. Nevertheless, and this he has too often forgotten, it is of the very essence of that message itself that it is a Divine gift of grace and election, that its acceptance means free, individual response and decision, and that discipleship means personal willingness to take up a cross and to follow.

Once these things are really grasped, the pluralist society no longer presents a problem, but rather a welcome opportunity, to the orthodox believer. It needs no justification. The problem now is rather to justify



the former employment of Christianity as the religion of a sacral society. For it at least tacitly assumed that the Christian Church and the human community were coterminous, and that membership of a nation, the habitation of a geographical area, entailed orthodox Christian faith and discipleship. From the outset, Christianity had meant a breakaway from the sacral institutions of Judaism, the formation of an *ecclesia* of the "called," of those who "were born, not of blood . . . nor of the will of man, but of God." And it was from the intolerance of the sacral society of the Roman Empire that the early Christian Church suffered.

The transformation of Christianity itself into the established religion of a sacral society for a millennium after the conversion of Constantine was an anomaly which produced many anomalies, as well as all that we call Christian civilization. Not least of these anomalies was the Inquisition and the *De haeretico comburendo.* The anomaly lay not only in the fact that preachers of Divine love found themselves supporting brutal force to ensure conformity in a matter which their theology told them was an affair wholly of gracious election and individual decision: in the very fact of acting as judges of religious orthodoxy on behalf

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of the secular power, they cannot easily be absolved of the charge of rendering to Caesar the things that are God's.

Yet the sacral ideal has its attractions, and the medieval ideal of synthesis of Church and State is so impressive that we have been slow to see that it was an anomaly rather than a norm. But its departure should be a matter of rejoicing rather than for the nostalgic regrets of the apologists of the "Europe is the Faith" school. A pluralist society is one in which a Christian must be a Christian indeed; in which even the theologian can breathe more freely, with less temptation to prostitute his craft or distort the teaching committed to him in the interests (however intrinsically legitimate) of social unity and order. Now he is better able to get on with his own job: the job which Aquinas described as the "greater clarification of the content of Divine Teaching" to human minds. Toleration itself opens to him new vistas, presents him with exciting tasks. For toleration brings intercommunication; wider and deeper knowledge of the variety of the needs of the human soul, and of the mysterious and manifold ways of God with man. Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the old dispensation; and only as the fulfilment of the truths which men already possess can His Gospel still be proclaimed. Idols must still be destroyed; but now men must freely destroy their own idols rather than have them destroyed by *force majeure*. Loving evangelism must replace sectarian proselytization; honest encounter must replace intimidation; the smoking flax must be fanned instead of quenched. To all this the theologian should have much to contribute. Perhaps he may even contribute to laying a firmer foundation for the Western world's precarious experiment in toleration itself.

APPEALS FOR READING MATTER

Two readers of this magazine tell of libraries in India that need books. Some nuns who are starting a teachers' training college are especially desirous of volumes on psychology, education and teaching methods. The community has already been abundantly supplied with magazines. New and used textbooks on educational and other subjects should be sent to: Sister Celine, Mount Carmel Convent, Koltayam, Multambalan, Travancore, South India.

Rev. Charles R. Bonnot, St. Xavier's, Patna, India, asks for books and magazines to distribute. He could use Catholic magazines in unlimited numbers, as the Indian Press service mails them to colleges, universities and libraries throughout India, Burma and Ceylon. Magazines should be sent a few at a time, Printed Matter. Six pounds, nine ounces is the weight limit for packages to India—which means four or five books to a package (postage: about 75c.)

FROM BRITAIN

Reaction On the Left

Cardiff

COMING shortly—Margate Theatre—Morgan Phillips presents The Hazy Gang—with Clem Attlee as the Reluctant Projectile—and, of course, Battling Bessie Breddoch, the Boadicea of Liverpool. So *Punch* introduces the forthcoming Labor Party Conference. But is "Hazy Gang" quite fair? Or "Reluctant Projectile"? *Punch's* Hamlet lacks its Prince. The center-piece for the Conference was published in June, under the title *Challenge to Britain*. And the *Challenge* is a lot less hazy, and less apt to provoke reluctance and splits, than anything Labor has given us for a very long time.

Its message is simple and to the point. Britain must at long last face the fact that it is not enough merely to recover from the war and climb back, so to speak, onto the prewar trend. To meet postwar conditions big new structural changes must be made in the British economy. Farming, chemicals, coal and oil production and engineering—above all aircraft and machine tools—must be expanded. For these are the keys to the four great aims of dollar saving: export expansion, investment for productivity, and aid to under-developed territories. The ways and means for expansion must be found by austerity: no general cuts in living standards, but only a very few improvements, to be carefully rationed by Parliament. There must be more socialist planning. Prices, materials, and investments must be more strictly controlled. Large sections of chemicals, engineering, and insurance (a key sector for the control of investments) are to be nationalized, along with water supply and much farmland. Savings will be planned, and if necessary supplemented through the budget. There is to be cooperation with other sterling area countries to control the flow of investments. And there should be more efforts, such as Labor had already called for in *Towards World Plenty*, to secure the creation of a world authority for mutual aid.

All this certainly sounds like business. The British economy *does* need structural changes of this kind. To get them quickly it is certainly necessary to use many of the same methods which brought about the swift change-over to war industry in 1939-41. The parallel is very relevant, for it is precisely rearmament which has strained the chemical and engineering industries

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to the limit. The ordinary adjustments of private enterprise have proved unable to cope either with the needed shift in Britain's economic structure (they were doing so more and more successfully down to 1950), or with rearmament on the present scale. But when both have to be coped with together, the situation calls for something more like war economics than the Conservative government has yet seen fit to give us.

Why then "hazy"? Partly no doubt it is a matter of opinion. *Punch* is read in the range of classes from middle to upper-upper. It is no socialist rag. But there may also be more solid reasons.

In the first place, the stoutest supporters of the line taken in *Challenge to Britain* hasten to point out that the gauntlet is thrown down not with the clash of steel but with the fluff of cotton wool. Not long ago Professor G. D. H. Cole published in the *Fabian Journal* an eight-point article for just such a program as this. The July issue of the *Journal* works through point by point how *Challenge to Britain* measures up to this. The score, counting sub-heads, is:

3 shots on Cole's target

1 probably on it

4 more or less on it as regards the statement of aims: but no explanation of how it is to be done

2 clear misses

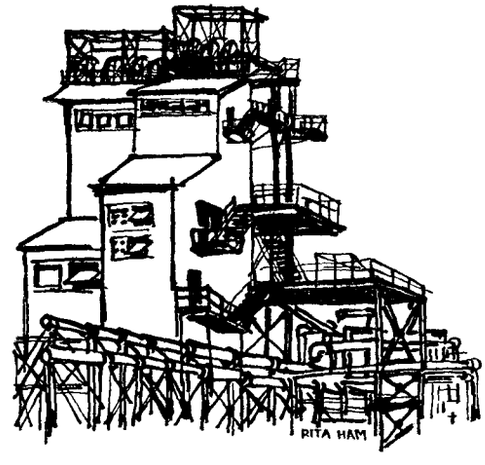
The two latter, as a matter of interest, refer to Cole's demand that the arms program be cut still further, and to his sinister suggestion that one way to persuade capitalists to do more is to let them earn, and keep, bigger profits. But the four cases of pious hope without ways and means are more significant. For here the haze penetrates right into the core of the program: such things as austerity, mobility between jobs and plans, the control of investments, and the limits of nationalization.

FROM another angle, the *war on want* group hammers away at the reluctance of the Labor leaders to commit themselves to actual figures, at any rate on a scale which might hurt, for aid to under-developed territories. Like Professor Cole, they see it as right and proper that standards of living should go down before they go up, and they think the electors may be idealistic enough to take it.

A third line of criticism, coming mainly from outside Britain, is that Labor is going along with the Conservatives in putting too exclusive an emphasis on the Commonwealth and the sterling area. Certainly there are big economic gains, even from a purely selfish United Kingdom point of view, to be expected from Commonwealth and sterling area developments. But are they quite as big as is evidently supposed? The Economic Commission for Europe recently analyzed the contribution of the various Commonwealth and sterling area countries to dollar saving and international investments. Dependent territories have piled up since the war a trading surplus of more than a billion and a half dollars. Independent territories, other than the United Kingdom, have run a deficit of a similar amount. The dependent territories have in effect lent the United Kingdom five hundred million pounds in new, postwar blocked sterling balances. The independent territories, old in that status like Australia or new like India and Ceylon, have insisted on the repayment of their wartime balances, and have attracted other substantial amounts of United Kingdom capital as well. As India and Australia do today, Nigeria and the Gold Coast will no doubt do tomorrow. And after all, seeing their under-developed condition, why not?

The counterpart to overestimates of the possibilities of the sterling area is underestimation of what is possible in Europe. Southern Europe has land and manpower. Northern Europe has capital, markets, and farmers who get yields per acre twice and three times those of Southern Italy, Turkey, or Spain. Tying the two together, on the lines of the Green Pool, and Europe's balance of payments problem disappears. In terms of speed, cost, and benefit to underdeveloped territories (Southern Europe has an income per head one-quarter of that of Great Britain) the operation would justify itself at least as fully as most of what is being done by Britain in the sterling area. But this is a possibility which neither Labor nor Conservatives have yet learned to take seriously.

The National Executive of the Labor Party may have a better reply to some of these points than the critics have allowed. Need one explain in detail how policies of austerity or of investment control are to be carried out, when the necessary techniques have become so painfully familiar in the last fifteen years? *Can* one have precise figures for aid to under-developed territories, when the rate at which these territories can absorb aid is still so uncertain? But there still remains the most serious criticism of all, and one which in a



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social-democratic program, is really a little startling. From beginning to end of *Challenge to Britain* there is no sign of the human factor. The accent throughout is an action by the Government: helped, no doubt, by the freer competition (rather mechanically conceived) which is to result from stronger anti-trust action. Gone are the phrases which abounded in earlier statements, about "democratic planning," joint consultation, or the value of autonomous but socially responsible working groups, or firms, or schools, or research institutes, or social services.

We in the university, for instance, are warned that, in our reactionary way, we have been training too few technicians in the natural and social sciences. Too much arts, not enough science. There is a lot of truth in this. Note, however, who is supposed to solve this problem. The Government is to set up a Royal Commission, on whose report universities will presumably act. There is not the faintest suggestion that anyone in the universities has done, is doing, or might be expected to do anything about it. I happen, by the nature of my subject, to be concerned with this very problem every day. And I need no Royal Commission to tell me that, if I can get my courses and research work right, students and grants will under the existing system come pouring in without serious difficulty, as has happened in other new and developing fields of work. Whereas if I cannot, no number of Royal Commissions will give the Labor Party the increase in the number of trained personnel specialists which it apparently expects my college to provide.

AND so on throughout *Challenge to Britain.* In industry the answer is to be nationalization and Government direction. In the housing world we are assured that it is idle to expect private landlords to convert big houses into flats or to equip older houses with modern amenities. "These problems can be dealt with only by the extension of municipal ownership." I lived until last week in a district where literally hundreds of dwellings have been converted and re-equipped in this way since 1940: and in no single case, so far as I know, was it done by any public authority whatever.

Now, the striking thing about all this is that it is not merely silly but quite contrary to the new thinking which is emerging in the Labor Movement itself. Take the recent Fabian study on *The Future of Nationalization,* by two unimpeachable socialists, Hugh Clegg and T. E. Chester, who happen also to be among the best qualified students of nationalized management in the country. It is very discreet. The principle of nationalization is right, and must be maintained. Only there are some initial mistakes to clear up. For instance, the trouble about nationalized coal or electricity is not that the Boards of these industries have failed to do what the Acts directed them to do. They have done it only too well. They were told to manage their industries, and so, unfortunately, they do: one management for anything up to three quarters of a million workers. Would it not, the authors ask, have been better to tell the Boards firmly that they had no over-all managerial authority, but merely authority to do such few things and provide such limited services as do in fact need to be centralized on that scale? Developing their arguments along this line, they arrive at a new structure based on many competing units plus common control services: one most unlike *Challenge to Britain,* but so closely resembling the Catholic ideal of vocational organization that it takes a fine philosophical sense to know the difference.

It looks, in fact, suspiciously as if *Challenge to Britain* is an attempt to buy unity within the Party at the expense of reaction. It *is* concerned with important problems. It *does* suggest correct answers. But it concerns only relatively immediate problems, and those solutions, or aspects of solutions, which the reactionary Bevanite wing—the group who wants to go on and on along the Sidney Webb-Keir Hardie line of sixty years ago—can comfortably support. It does not satisfy the demand, felt all over the labor movement, for a new view of far horizons in internal politics: a vision of the next stride towards a better social order, such as socialism of the Webb-Keir Hardie brand could still offer down to 1945-49. That is where the real haze has been hanging in the Labor world. And *Challenge to Britain* does nothing to blow it away.

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY.

THE SCREEN

THE POSTMAN RINGS SEVERAL TIMES

WHAT with the sudden plethora of mystery and murder films, you have your choice this summer of being chilled in 3-D or 2-D. But in any dimension these new movies are not exactly prizes.

Of "Inferno," I must say right off that it's the best of the 3-D pictures I've seen so far. Except for an occasional rock or fist or hissing snake popping out into the audience, it doesn't try the usual tricks; and its Technicolor photography of the Mojave Desert in three dimensions is stunning. Except for certain improbabilities on which the plot depends (such as Robert Ryan's setting his own broken leg and then dragging himself across the desert) this story is more adult than most of the pap which the movies have been exhibiting in 3-D.

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Written by Francis Cockrell from an original story about a husband who's left to die on the desert by his unfaithful wife and her lover, who hope to cash in on his millions, the script may remind you at times of one of those James M. Cain fireside horrors. "Inferno" has the advantage, however, of concentrating on the deserted husband, (Robert Ryan) who, in spite of his past dissipations as a millionaire playboy, turns out to be almost as ingenious as Robinson Crusoe. Roy Baker has directed these improbabilities well, and has given the whole film an atmosphere of reality. Rhonda Fleming is decorative and mean as the wife; and Henry Hull is properly Tobacco Roadish as a prospector.

AFTER seeing that first-rate ballet kidding the hard-boiled school of detection in "The Band Wagon," it is hard to take "I, the Jury" seriously. Or maybe it would be difficult to take seriously any film based on a Mickey Spillane story—hopped up as such stories are with sex, violence and a peculiar brand of taking the law into one's own hands. The one thing that Harry Essex forgot when he wrote and directed the script is that the audience has to be able to follow what's going on. There's such a profusion of names and nicknames in "I, the Jury" that you can't tell which character is which and who is hoping to kill whom. This 3-D film's title sums up its theme. Mike Hammer shoots a beautiful blonde in the stomach, and she says, "How could you!" and he replies, "It was easy!"

ALSO unusually complicated for a murder-mystery is "Plunder of the Sun." But you'll find this fascinating story worth the effort; and the black-and-white photography of Mexico, although in good old-fashioned two dimension, is extraordinarily beautiful. Director John Farrow is particularly successful in capturing the feel of Mexico, complete with lush towns and sun-baked ruins.

Gorgeous Patricia Medina plays a Mexican woman who draws American Glenn Ford into an involved search for a priceless Zapotepec treasure. He has to be quick with gun, fist and brain to deal with Diana Lynn, a nymph who drinks too much, Francis L. Sullivan, Sean McClory and various other sinister individuals.

AS a minor mystery thriller, "Dangerous Crossing" will also hold your interest. In this suspenseful item, Jeanne Crain plays a bride who boards an ocean liner with her husband (Carl Betz), who promptly disappears. No one will believe Jeanne's story—especially after she finds her stateroom empty and another cabin assigned to her in her maiden name. Director Joseph M. Newman does everything he can to continue the mystery aboard this ship, and if the ship's crew and passengers think Jeanne is bats, you can hardly blame them. Miss Crain looks pretty wild-eyed as she searches for her husband up and down decks.

Fortunately for this befuddled dame, at least one person is sympathetic—the ship's doctor, played with understanding and a strong right arm by Michael Rennie. "Dangerous Crossing" may seem a little too hysterical at times and you may guess the solution long before the finale, but you'll find that the picture works up a nice relaxing atmosphere of horror.

FOR those who prefer the chase kind of thriller to the mystery variety there's "Shoot First," a rambling cloak-and-dagger film made in England. It has an awful lot of people pursuing other people over the heath and into London, and you're likely to get lost in all the plotting about espionage and attempts to steal the data on an atomic bomb test, but Robert Parrish has directed it all with an artful mixture of fun and mayhem. Joel McCrea and Evelyn Keyes in the leads are well supported by Roland Culver, Karel Stepanek, Marius Goring and others in this international cast. Eric Ambler wrote the screenplay from a Geoffrey Household novel; and while "Shoot First" won't win any cinematic prizes, neither will it bore you.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE UKRAINIAN PROBLEM"

Notre Dame, Ind.

TO the Editors: In The Commonweal [July 31], there appeared a review of the book *Soviet Imperialism* recently published by the University of Notre Dame Press. I feel that Mr. John A. Lukacs, who reviewed this publication, made unwarranted accusations about my article "The Ukrainian Problem." His language does not provide any basis for an objective appraisal.

According to his review, my presentation "touches on historical dishonesty and contains falsehoods, as in Pap's account of the Russo-Polish War of 1920, as in his reference to the 'Independent Cossack State' of 1648, as in his description of the Carpatho-Ukrainian operetta state of 1939." I am at a loss to understand his criticism since I did not evaluate any of these points but merely presented facts based on data on which there is much material in many languages. Likewise,

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I fail to see any reason for his derogatory phrase "slovenly Poles" since I did not use nor imply it.

The reviewer has a ready-made rejection of my description of the developments in the Ukraine during World War II. He selected a sentence from my article to prove me guilty of "dishonest" presentation. His eagerness to discredit the Ukrainian aspirations for liberty becomes especially obvious when he refers to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army as being in reality, "half marauders, half myth." The reviewer would have a difficult task to prove his assertion, for even as late as 1947, the Soviet Government in Moscow was forced to conclude a special tripartite treaty among the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia to successfully combat the activity of this Ukrainian Insurgent Army. From the moral and political point of view, Mr. Lukacs' remarks could result in a tragic misunderstanding concerning the anti-Soviet attitude; if the readers of the review would trust his "objectivity," they would have to believe that the Ukrainian struggle against tyranny was and is a myth. If it were only a myth, then the Soviet system would have to be considered so strong and efficient that opposition to it would be foolish and unnecessary.

In his reference to Ukrainian "crude opportunism," Mr. Lukacs is partly right. In the initial period of war, the Ukrainians hailed Hitler as the liberator from Soviet tyranny; but this phase of the Ukrainian development is described and evaluated in my article quite thoroughly. I did not omit this period of Ukrainian hope to restore their independence with the Germans' help, nor did I neglect to describe the reality which followed after the introduction of the Nazi policy of extermination of Slavs and Jews. The secret German war documents, now generally available, would enlighten Mr. Lukacs on how the Ukrainians hastened the process of deterioriation of the German power in Eastern Europe after 1942.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Lukacs did not even mention the Ukrainian-Soviet relations which were the basis of my article. For the readers of The Commonweal, it may have been of interest to learn how the Uniate Catholic Church was liquidated, how millions were starved to death because of their refusal to accept the Soviet regime, and how much the Soviet leaders feared constant Ukrainian opposition against the Kremlin.

I should like to stress that my article on "The Ukrainian Problem" was written on the basis of available source material in English, Russian, Ukrainian and German. All my major points were substantiated with quotations from these sources. Finally, I stand behind the Ukrainian aspirations for freedom just as I am anxious to preserve American liberty; because in my opinion, freedom is indivisible.

MICHAEL S. PAP.

Philadelphia, Penna.

TO the Editors: Accused as I stand of being "eager to discredit the Ukrainian aspirations for liberty," perhaps I should be permitted to return to fundamentals. Professor Pap is a Ukrainian patriot. There is certainly nothing ignoble about this. But to be a patriot and an historian are two separate things; and to be a Ukrainian patriot and an advocate to the West are two even more different things. That he should embellish the recent, and tragic, history of the Eastern European peoples with a lantern which illuminates Ukrainians and casts ill and livid shadows upon all others, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Germans, Russians, is perhaps understandable in a patriot; but in view of the lessons of tragic disunity in that region it is not excusable in an historian. Nor is it excusable to reason with phrases: the glib logic of the indivisibility of freedom, if steadfastly pursued, would mean that Ukrainians, among others, should have risen at Bunker Hill, Sedan, and the Alamo. To sympathize, because of circumstances, with the Ukrainian cause, is one thing; to believe that thus the interests of the United States require the making of a Greater Ukraine is another. In Professor Pap's wishful mind the two causes might be identical. To me they are not.

Rebuttal, to me, has always been disagreeable; for, in the minds of most, *qui s'excuse, s'accuse.* Nor is there space for detail in this review of a review of a review. The following may suffice. Professor Pap appeals to "the secret German war documents, now generally available"; these should enlighten me. Except for the haphazardly strewn and disarranged few presented at the Nuremberg Trials there are no such documents now generally available. There are practically none of the period after 1942 to which Professor Pap refers.

JOHN A. LUKACS.

"THE ROSENBERG CASE"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I would like if possible, without raising my voice as Robert Barrat did throughout his fire-eating article on the Rosenberg case, [August 14], to offer what I think might be an American answer to his wholesale indictment of this country in the matter, and particularly of American Catholics.

Let me say first for the record that I do not personally believe that capital punishment should be a part of the law of our land. But it is, and even M. Barrat isn't raising the issue of the rightness or wrongness of such a penalty as a general proposition. He is, rather, accusing the American people of making a terrible mistake in permitting their courts, after due process of law, to apply this penalty *in the Rosenberg*

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case, and of not protesting when our President refused to intervene and set aside the judgment of the courts, *in that particular case.*

Therefore, we can proceed directly to the consideration of what special merits in the Rosenbergs' case should move us to make unusual efforts to exempt them from a penalty applicable to the crime with which they were charged, and of which they were convicted.

M. Barrat suggests first that French belief in the innocence of the Rosenbergs should so move us Americans. The French made a tragic mistake with Dreyfus and Dreyfus was a Jew. The Rosenbergs also happened to be Jewish and remind the French uneasily of the Dreyfus case. But I don't think the American mind would conclude from the fact that Dreyfus was innocent and a Jew that the Rosenbergs, who were also Jewish, were, therefore, innocent. Nor do I think that the opinion of the French people on the subject of the Rosenbergs' guilt or innocence, derived mostly from newspaper accounts (and let us admit, a considerable amount of Communist propaganda) would be considered by the average American as a good substitute for the processes of our judicial system. Americans are inclined to believe that trial by law is superior to trial by public opinion—French, or otherwise.

Moreover, M. Barrat admits that French opinion in the matter is "on the basis of the facts we have." I doubt if even he would suggest that those facts could be more complete than those before the court and jury which tried the Rosenbergs. Most Americans seem to feel, based on the facts they have, that the guilt of the Rosenbergs was proved by an overwhelming amount of evidence. In fact, the guilt of the Rosenbergs was scarcely questioned by the non-Communists in this country who did urge that the death penalty be commuted.

M. Barrat's allegation that some ask "By what right do you condemn the executions behind the iron curtain?" is hardly worth an answer. But perhaps it can be covered together with his earlier statement that events were "more than we could bear: the terrible succession of dates and stays of execution, the electric chair made ready, withdrawn, brought forward and withdrawn again, the ordeal of the trial, the direct telephone wire between Sing Sing and the White House. . . ." Americans would think, I am sure, that the ordeal of a fair trial, the endless delays to permit appeals and the study of every possible aspect of the case before applying so final a penalty is infinitely preferable to being shot down by a firing squad on the very day of arrest as the young East Berlin worker was at the recent outbreak in East Germany. . . .

And is not M. Barrat mistaken in saying that the Pope asked mercy for Ethel Rosenberg? It is our understanding here that he merely communicated to the President of the United States the fact that he had received numerous requests to intervene on the Rosenbergs' behalf.

And this brings us to the point of mercy. In the Rosenberg case mercy was there for the asking. By using that direct wire from Sing Sing to the White House and communicating their willingness to cooperate with the government by offering what information they could on espionage activities that might still be endangering the security of this country the Rosenbergs could have gotten mercy for themselves—and what is infinitely more important—would have shown mercy for their own children, and relatives, to say nothing of their fellow-citizens.

This is true, of course, unless we accept M. Barrat's opinion that the Rosenbergs were innocent and, therefore, had nothing to confess. But most Americans obviously believe, on the contrary, that the Rosenbergs were guilty. And holding such a belief is neither immoral nor un-Christian. . . .

And now I think there may be some things the *Americans* don't understand about the French in their attitude on the Rosenberg case. There are a number of legal executions carried out in this country and other countries every year. Why are the French, in the name of mercy, so cut and bleeding over just the Rosenberg case? There's no denying the Rosenbergs received due process of law. In fact, M. Barrat seems to be complaining about this. And there's no doubt in American minds that giving atomic secrets to the Communists is a terrible crime—considerably worse than a crime of passion. Many consider it rather like giving a loaded gun to a homicidal maniac—only with much graver consequences.

But *this* is the case the French think should make the Christian conscience cry out in protest. Were they half as sorry when the British executed William (Lord Haw Haw) Joyce? Or when the Communists wiped out Rudolph Slansky?

M. Barrat indicates that both democracy and Christianity have been betrayed by the American people in the Rosenberg case. It seems to me that he is a little fuzzy-minded on both. Trial by law, every protection of the individual's rights (even to the extent of taking two years about it) *is* America's idea of democracy. And the attitude of a judge in devoting himself to prayer and prolonged examination of conscience before undertaking the awful duty of sentencing convicted criminals, is certainly in accord with principles of Christian morality as well as Jewish morality. And this Judge Kaufman did before passing sentence on the Rosenbergs. But M. Barrat presumes to call us American Catholics to an examination of our Christian conscience because we did not reject Judge Kaufman's judgment and seek to impose one more in keeping with French ideas of morality. . . .

CAROLINE ADAMS.

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Wolfe, the Critics, And the People

SEYMOUR KRIM

THE most exacting American literary critics have always been dubious of Thomas Wolfe: he is undiscriminating; he is verbose; he is too subjective; he had no sense of structure; his lyricism is inflated; he was a rapacious adolescent. Allen Tate, Edmund Wilson and Robert Penn Warren have chopped Wolfe up in this way. The average intelligent reader continues to buy Wolfe's four big novels in ever-increasing numbers however and to press them on his friends. (The income from the sale of Wolfe's novels is today three times what it was in 1938, the year of his death.) How do we account for this split between the critics and the readers, the Head and the Heart? How do we account for the fact that many of our creative writers, from William Faulkner to James Jones, hold Wolfe in high personal esteem, in spite of the critics' derision?

Let us make no mistake about it: Wolfe is not enigmatic as a writer in the sense that Melville or Joyce were enigmatic; but the reaction to him has been as divided —not neatly, but sharply—as it has to any writer in recent history. Time, that excellent cooler-offer, will doubtless make clear aspects of Wolfe which our close and still relatively hot perspective does not allow. But by taking advantage of all we now know about the author I believe we can gain a jump on the calendar and strike a balance that will at least partially unite both critics and readers.

The book which encourages this article, *The Enigma of Thomas Wolfe,* edited by Richard Walser [*Harvard.* $4.75], does not attempt to do this. It is a compendium of biographical and critical works, obviously put together with reverence and affection, but it falls over backwards to be "fair" and hence includes a number of uncomplimentary pieces. (Thus your modern lover: where he would acclaim, and want to ring doorbells in the street, a cautionary tact forces him to cherish in private and act as impersonal as an IBM machine in public.) It is an interesting collection of Wolfeiana, rich in gossip and anecdote, provocative in criticism and altogether a good buy (or borrow) for the reader who hasn't yet been intimidated out of his liking for Wolfe. However, since that main question—of the breach between the enthusiasm of a living audience, and the coolness of the professional umpires of literature—is left unanswered by Mr. Walser, I would like to turn to it here.

THE majority of professional literary critics are primarily concerned with an author's accomplishment; the more responsible the critic the more painstaking he will be in trying to assess the final value of the books that pass his desk. But the average intelligent reader is not concerned with this at all. He reads for the most personal of reasons, and the books he likes best are those that mean the most to *him*: inspire him, exalt him and increase his capacity for feeling.

Probably of all the writers of his generation in America, Wolfe had this effect on the largest number of readers. They did not, and apparently still do not, care that his books are not "well-made" or that the author under another name is the hero of each. What they do care urgently about is what these books make *them* feel; how the intensity of Wolfe's quest carries past the page into their own lives and stirs them as no American novelist of the same period can do. For the non-professional reader a novel is an extension of his private life; and when a writer like Wolfe can make him participate completely in the literary experience—make him feel that he himself, bound to his job, wife, family, bills, is King

for a Day—it is natural and inevitable that he will esteem that writer. (There is nothing we will not give to the person who can show us the undiscovered world within ourselves, for most of us are unaware of the possibilities we hold.)

Wolfe did this for a large number of his contemporaries; he is still doing it for many who are coming to him for the first time now, and it is this which accounts for the admiration in which he is held by the ordinary reader. His hero and his books—and they are one—are remarkably easy to identify with; here are the familiar prejudices, desires and values which a majority of his

Mr. Krim is a short-story writer and critic who contributes to Commentary, The Partisan Review and other magazines.

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countrymen hold. There is nothing strange or uncommon about them. Wolfe does not challenge ideas of good and evil, like Nietzsche or Dostoievsky; he does not turn his back on convention, like Whitman, or lay it bare, like Ibsen; he has none of the dark pessimism of Melville, or the super-intelligence of Henry James. He has none of the difficult qualities that put readers off. But he did have the compulsion to act out his life in the absolute terms that his contemporaries either day-dreamed about, or saw in movies, and to make of that life and its unswerving drive the subject of his books.

There are writers in each generation who, as time goes by, are seen to be more important for their effect upon their contemporaries than upon posterity. They are usually writers who inspire their readers to action; the very words of their books are active rather than meditative, and when one has finished reading them one wants to storm a Bastille. Such writers communicate their own sense of necessity for doing battle with the immediate life that lies before them. Should they live on in world literature it is in spite of themselves, because they really do not care; they are men with missions in the here-and-now.

Wolfe was, helplessly, of this number—a fact which should become more clear as the less dedicated writers of his own generation flake off into library dust. As with the other "possessed" men, his influence on his own time in America was broader than that of literature itself. He got under the skin of many people who were not to become involved with writing and sent them into life—the law, medicine, teaching—with a fresh sense of vitality and an extension of ambition taught by his own flight.

Englishmen of the generation of D. H. Lawrence and after sometimes say that Lawrence not only gave English literature a powerful hypodermic; he pioneered possibilities in life itself for the ordinary educated Englishman. Wolfe did not have Lawrence's radically critical mind, nor did he lay siege to the crippling institutions of modern society, as did Lawrence. But by sheer personal genius—wildly egocentric, even childish, as it was, —it can be said that he entered into the lives of his American readers as Lawrence did his English, and lifted them to a new level of intensity in their response to the immediate life confronting them. He was a national phenomenon such as few other writers ever become, and in his instinctive striving for the "highest" and the "biggest" he crystallized the unarticulated feelings of thousands of other ordinary Americans brought up under the same conditions and subject to the same values.

From the moral and philosophical point of view Wolfe probably failed, much as the national ethos of materialism and boyish individualism has failed. And his lack of that "intellectual substratum, which acts as a quiet preservative against the ravages of time," (to use Clifton Fadiman's words) may make intelligent readers in the future impatient with what might seem to them his gross

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overemphasis on the local and temporary. (The typewriter, like the sword, cuts two ways: fame and even strong national significance like Wolfe's, affecting the lives of many more people than the average writer can ever dream of touching, is dearly paid for, and very few of the artists or thinkers we admire today will speak meaningfully to the future.) But if it is only the few who survive the present, it is an equally small number who create it: endow it with significance, phrase it so that it has shape and definition, and involve other human beings in an awareness of experience which before the creator was without a name.

This Wolfe certainly did. He made urgent what the majority took for granted, often disproportionately and nakedly, but by so doing he dramatized the relationship of the individual ego to the mass of American life. In fact so strong was his necessity for expressing the needs of the unmoored individual ego in a society which is experimental and untraditional that he forewent the conventions of the regular novel in order to "get it all" down on the page. When we read him we read the confessions—trace the inner soul, as it were, with nothing left out—of a characteristic American of the first third of the century, raised to fever pitch. Wolfe's giant frame and hungers, instead of making him freakish or unique, merely emphasized what was typical of the stock from which he came. Through him speaks much of the experience and the yearning of other men and women who hadn't his means of expression, but who recognized from the first that he was speaking for them.

The Germans, who celebrated Wolfe as the writer of an American epic, seem to have been the first large body of readers at the necessary distance to recognize the powerful ethnic roots of his work. Our most penetrating readers in this country no doubt also felt them, but because of the legitimate criticisms of the sketchiness of Wolfe's formal ideas and the near drowning of any clear moral comment in the welter of his sensuous imagery, they were not as free to speak the truth as the Germans. But we are wrong if we think that even basic criticisms of an artist destroy him: to the extent he says things we need to hear that *no one else can say* he is alive and fructifying, though his sins be as the sins of ten.

LET us assume that Wolfe's novels are indeed lopsided and over-intense for their subject matter. Their author would then seem to have failed in his first duty: of being a writer equal to the heroic pretensions of his work. But did he really fail—and was he primarily a "writer," in the guarded and professional sense of Hemingway, or even Hawthorne? There are actors on the human scene who *use* writing as a means to carry their message to men, but one always has the conviction that they could as well have used their literal voices, could those carry, or their very physical presences—"Camerado, who touches this book touches a man!" says Whitman—as the written word. The necessity for expression breaks through all formally conceived mediums so that the seed of their personal inspiration can be planted in ourselves. Once it is planted these seminal spirits die, as if Nature itself intended that they should be sacrificed once their function had been fulfilled.

A Wolfe may thus sacrifice his lasting literary greatness, but his effect on his own time and place is of incalculable fertility, giving back to the reservoir of life what others are constantly taking out and wasting. Such a man can create literature greater than his own by creating the will to life in all who receive his communication: he is not so much a "writer," in the strict and possibly the best sense, as a "giver," fated to use himself completely for others whether he wills it or not.

There are very few writers who make impressions upon the national heart, and when they appear we should be humble enough in the face of the phenomenon to admit the facts, even if the facts indicate we have been holding a closed or sectarian view. Life is greater than literature, and the man who enriches life is greater than he who enriches literature; for to have given even one small thing directly to existence is to know that it will be procreated infinitely, while to give to literature alone is to give to one of life's finer shadows. The greatest writers have changed life first, and literature afterwards. Wolfe is not of this number, but if one had to choose between a sacrifice to the substance or to the shadow who is there who would not know the choice? We can be proud that such writers as Wolfe have been and will be, for our indebtedness to them is that of which Lucretius spoke when he said some men "pass the flame of life from one to another, as do the relay runners."

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The Madness Which Is Wisdom

TWO STUDIES IN VIRTUE. By Christopher Sykes. Knopf. $4.

By GEOFFREY ASHE

MR. Sykes has followed his *Four Studies in Loyalty* with *Two Studies in Virtue*. If the geometric progression continues, we may doubtless expect *One Study in Chastity*. That is a frivolous reaction, but all too easy in the presence of such an odd linkage as this.

Apparently odd, at any rate. The first of the present two studies is a short life of the Reverend Richard Sibthorp, an earnest Anglican clergyman who broke all records for religious hesitancy in the hesitant era of the Oxford Movement. Belonging to a pre-Newman generation, he was converted to Catholicism in 1811, hauled back by his father, converted again in 1841, repelled into apostasy two years later, converted again in 1865, and then partly repelled again by the dogma of Papal Infallibility.

Lytton Strachey never got his claws fairly into this man. If he had, the result would have been riotous. Even Christopher Sykes, though sympathetic, has to admit that Sibthorp is "distinctly funny." And yet the process was very serious for poor Sibthorp. Apart from its intrinsic value, this study of him poses an interesting question: Are there cases where biography is truly impossible? Since *any* account of Sibthorp's life must make him ridiculous, does it not follow that *any* account must also be essentially false?

Whether or not the first Study in Virtue is an acceptable production, the second comes as a surprise. It is a history of Zionism up to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, its main substance being an analysis of the part played in British Government councils by the author's father, Sir Mark Sykes. The story is well told and well documented. Nothing of comparable size is likely to supersede it. But why Virtue? How did Balfour and his colleagues get between the same covers as Richard Sibthorp?

Mr. Sykes gives his reasons, but as they stand they are none too clear. This is a pity, since the incongruous coupling does suggest certain truths, and a slight shift in point of view would have unified and clarified the whole presentation.

What the author is really writing about is not the "virtue" of Sibthorp, the Zionist leaders, or Arthur Balfour. It is the impact on the world of two mighty entities not explicable in the world's terms. Sibthorp knew no peace, because the ancient Church he so heartily disliked had nevertheless cast a spell on him. Balfour and the other ministers were made to stop short and catch their breath by the sudden presence of Israel, casting its mysterious shadow over a pre-eminently practical war.

In each case the men bewitched into taking action were English patricians, reared in an atmosphere of enlightened compromise to which the intruding power was alien. In each case the power focused itself through the medium of a vivid example. Sibthorp discovered Father Vianney, the Curé of Ars, an undeniable saint so remote in spirit from the civilization of the age as to appear almost insane. Soon afterwards he quit the comfort of Anglicanism for the last time, conquered by the Curé's triumphant and blasting quixotry.

It was much the same in the Jewish business. Joseph Chamberlain offered the Zionists Uganda, one of the finest territories in Africa—and they refused it, holding out for Palestine. How could any Imperialist statesman recover from a shock like that? Father Vianney was mad, the Zionists were mad, yet somehow their madness made sanity look small.

If it is "virtue" to perceive a fact of this sort and to act upon it, then the clergyman and the politicians were virtuous. But I think the issues raised by this book are more subtle than the title implies.

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A Season in Hell

THE BOLD SABOTEURS. By Chandler Brossard. Farrar, Straus & Young. $3.50.

By GEORGE MILES

THE idea of the rebel or the outcast has often attracted writers. In *The Bold Saboteurs,* Chandler Brossard has created a young, violent, shrewd, passionate nonconformist called Yogi to concretize the defiance which is often associated with the rebel—the defiance of convention, standardization and mediocrity. Horrified, early in life, by his father's drunken bouts and the shrill complaints of his mother, bewildered by the eccentricities of an older brother who spends himself in messianic activities, Yogi (sometimes called Jimmy, sometimes George) becomes a boy thief.

He begins by stealing food from store fronts, then progresses to room liftings, car stealings and muggings. At one point he joins a gang of hoodlums and spends his time in a city park. His sexual education is undertaken by a couple of remarkably accessible women who are fascinated by his wit and wisdom. Later he lives in a dirty loft along with a bohemian mural painter. Here he succeeds in overcoming the attacks of diabolical rats but not the assault of a lust-ridden giantess who seems to be Evil Incarnate.

During his adventures Yogi occasionally sees or meets his wandering father, but these moments are always embarrassing and frustrating. Frequently he experiences dreams or periods of fantasy during which he faces some desperate dilemma. At the close of the book he is preoccupied with the problem of finding his brother's house in one of the dreamlike sections, and when he is told that he is considered by everyone to be dead, he goes to the docks, runs from pier to pier, looking for the boat which would "take him back."

It is obvious that Mr. Brossard's surface incidents are intended to transmit more than the mere narrative would imply. The perceptive outcast himself, his relationships with his degenerate father and his drudging mother, his position as a destructive visionary opposite his activist, evangelizing brother are clearly symbolic elements in this serious work of fiction. The situations which illustrate Yogi's sensations of guilt contribute to the symbolic mood, and the protagonist's multiple names suggest that he is intended to be another Joycean H. C. E.—Here Comes Everybody. There are, indeed, certain intimations that Mr. Brossard is indebted to Joyce and Rimbaud.

But only in a few places does this work reveal a talent and imagination sufficient to attain its ambitious end. Mr. Brossard makes clear his awareness of some delicate human predicaments—the one which involves filial love and disgust at parental evil; another which concerns love of neighbor on the one hand, and desire for recognition, justice, on the other. In a most effective moment he shows Yogi offering

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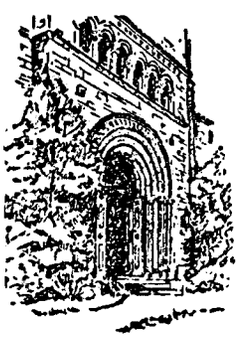

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friendly gestures to a group of Negroes, but remaining suspicious of their laughter lest it make him appear ridiculous. And Mr. Brossard is definitely on safe ground in his reflections on hypocrisy, regimentation and the bourgeois standards of success. Nevertheless, his complete creation is not convincing.

The adventures of Yogi never develop any cumulative force and the individual acts are not especially interesting either as moments of heightened awareness or as examples of waste and deception. The book becomes a listing—and a monotonous listing. The criminal actions and the vulgar words make small impression and the scenes of sexual play are not nearly so sensational as their tone indicates they are supposed to be.

Mr. Brossard never quite manages to disassociate himself from his material and this connivance stifles whatever allegorical or universal significance the writing was meant to establish. Parenthetically, the use of illicit sexual scenes to express moments of illumination or conversion or education might be a starting point for a thesis aimed at demonstrating the reverse naiveté exhibited by their continual employment. It's difficult to view the excited passages as transfigurations when the same situations are being re-created at thousands of military posts, business offices, bars and athletic clubs in terms just as awe-full, intense and poetic.

A Fated Fall

TOO LATE THE PHALAROPE. By Alan Paton. Scribners. $3.50.

By T. E. CASSIDY

SURELY, this is one of the most moving novels of recent years. In *Cry, the Beloved Country* Alan Paton showed he had a rare and lovely gift of compassionate human insight. This new book is even better. With simple and beautiful language it makes a memorable journey into the misery and despair engendered by a hopeless collision between strict, unforgiving man-made law and human weakness. Its hero, Pieter van Vlaanderen, though, is

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not merely a symbol of this human weakness. He is a highly individualized person, who has positive knowledge of himself and his code, and knows that he is plunging toward destruction.

Because Pieter, a young police lieutenant, war hero, and athlete, is a hero in his own land. He is of distinguished family, an ideal husband and father, kind, understanding, and, most of all, sympathetic toward his fellow-men, whether white or black. But he transgresses. He is a victim of his loins—a victim who becomes enmeshed in a race violation and the personal hatred of a subordinate. There is no place for heart and humanity in the strict black and white mores and laws. Pieter is doomed from his first fall, to fall and fall again, although he knows to what end he will come.

Tante Sophie tells his story, from his tragic journal, and every now and again he himself talks through his conscience. There are tender scenes of family love and terrifying scenes of fear and remorse. His father is the august patriarch of the clan, respected and feared by family and colleagues alike. His mother is a gracious lady, as are his wife and his sister. The young dominie is a humble admirer of the Lieutenant, and a rugby colleague as well as suitor of his sister. His superiors and subordinates, save one, love him. Yet through all this adoring society runs his own terror and guilt, till he sees in the actions and responses of most of these people an indictment of himself and his secret.

His friend Kappie, the merchant, and his Tante, both of whom know there is something terrible gnawing at his vitals but know not what it is, are his possible salvation, but the rapport is not established until everyone has been struck down and dumb by his discovery. Perhaps the most terrible reaction is the father's solemn disowning, climaxed when he reads the words of the Hundred and Ninth Psalm: *When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. . . .*

The righteousness that dictates the terms of the lieutenant's disaster is not peculiar to South Africa, but the apparatus is localized so that one feels that Paton, in his quietly devastating way, has tested and found miserable the social caste rigor of that land. And yet the fierce racial and linguistic pride of the Afrikaner has some sort of majesty. The laws and customs are inexorably fixed and demand absolute loyalty transcending human feelings and failings. The lieutenant, in his own administration of justice, is strong but loving. When the other justice is applied to him, he is wrecked but he understands. Even the devotion of his aunt and his friend seems, somehow, out of the order of things as the order of things is applied in his land.

The Line

CURRENT SOVIET POLICIES. Edited by Leo Gruliow. Praeger. $6.

By M. A. FITZSIMONS

THIS is a collection of material on the Nineteenth Communist Party Congress and on the reorganization of the Soviet regime immediately after Stalin's death. Drawn from and in the format of that valuable publication, *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* it includes Stalin's keynote "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR," the material presented to the Congress, the preliminary discussion, the Congresses in the Republics (the most interesting part), the work of the Congress, and the denunciation of the denunciation of the Kremlin doctors.

The Congress was Big Brother's last roundup—the Congress had not met since 1939. Stalin may well have thought of the Congress as his last, for the dominant note is self-satisfied: the capitalist world's loss of markets and the steady growth of Soviet power. Apart from Stalin's schoolmasterly economic pamphlet and his discussion of proposed economic textbooks in which he reveals his talent for exposition and his mastery of what Koestler has called "Socialist Sarcasm," his only words to the Congress were addressed to the foreign guests. He gratefully recalled the aid which they had once rendered to the Soviet Union and, then, noted that the Soviet Union was strong enough to help them substantially.

The proceedings throw little light on foreign policy. There are references to the likelihood of divisions and wars within the capitalist world and to the gains which these have meant for the Soviet Union in the past. But the emphasis on Soviet power carries the implication that the Soviet Union is no longer limited to the hope of capitalist schism.

In domestic affairs the most persistent concern was with the training and morale of the guardians, the Communists. Some of the guardians have grown complacent and even corrupt. Self-criticism has been stifled by bureaucracy, not, of course, by democratic centralism. Ill-received criticism, however, may involve such grave penalties that critical initiative cannot be widely maintained.

There is general complaint about the failure of Soviet writers and historians to deal with modern subjects. The complaint is amply justified, for there has been very little writing in the dangerous field of Soviet Russian history. Historians have turned to medieval or earlier history, or, preferably, to editing documents in the sometimes vain hope of avoiding trouble. Among the minor nationalities early modern history has been quite dangerous, for it is genuinely difficult to determine which nationalist uprisings were bourgeois and reactionary and which were on the side of progress.

The general reader may find the appearance of the book formidable, but a little patience will take him behind the Iron Curtain, although he will have trouble with "Newspeak."

REVIEWERS

Geoffrey Ashe has written criticism for journals in both England and the United States.

George Miles is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

T. E. Cassidy is doing advanced studies in English literature at Columbia.

M. A. Fitzsimons is a member of the History department at Notre Dame and an editor of *The Review of Politics*.

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BELLOC

Twelve issues of The Commonweal had appeared when Hilaire Belloc first wrote for this magazine. The date was January 28, 1925, and the article was on the League of Nations (he thought it ineffectual). During the following decade Belloc wrote twenty-two more times for The Commonweal, his last article appearing in 1936, when the curtains were being drawn on Belloc's Europe.

He frequently used these offices on his American trips. The Commonweal's editorial secretary today remembers the vibrant, aging man in a black cape pacing the room, dictating to her sometimes until almost midnight, when the vacant building echoed his words and the streets outside were black and silent.

In one of his Commonweal articles he wrote: "I would like to speak of the word mystical, that is, the word of poetry and of magic; the light word which by music destroys a happy communion between two souls; the definitive word which binds together in the sacraments husband and wife, man and God; the comic word; the word of doom; the word of absolution—and so forth. But, like the lion at the zoo, I have not the elbow room. Perhaps when I am absolved from the limits of time and space, I may be granted opportunities to say all I have to say about the word. . . .

"Let me, then, end up with this. What I like best about the famous carol, especially when I get to it over the snow at midnight in my own country, is the couplet:

Patris eterni
Verbum Caro factum.

"I like the notes to which it is set. I like the truth which it expounds. I like the occasion. And who shall blame me?"

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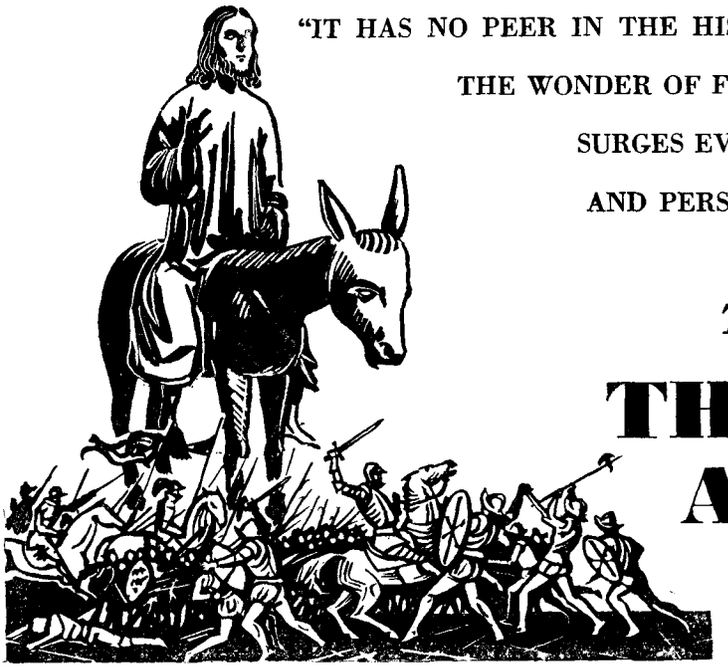

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